visit, issues relating to award of a few discovered blocks to Indian oil companies in joint venture with National Oil Corporation (NOC), Libya, upgradation of NOC's refineries by Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) in a joint venture with NOC, providing city gas distribution services in Libya by various Indian companies, training of NOC's personnel in hydrocarbon sector by various Indian Oil Companies etc. were discussed. IOCL has shown interest for modernization and upgradation of Ras Lanuf refinery by a Joint Venture Company to be co-promoted by National Oil Corporation (NOC), Libya and IOCL.

(g) No agreement has been signed with Libya in this regard.

Opening of banks in Uttar Pradesh

†*215. SHRI BANWARI LAL KANCHHAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether proposals for opening more branches of Nationalised and Co-operative banks in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh are pending with the Central Government; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Proposals for opening branches of nationalized and cooperative banks are submitted to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and not to the Government of India. Under the present Branch Authorization Policy of the RBI relating to Scheduled Commercial Banks, the banks are free to submit their Annual Branch Expansion Plans any time during the year. The RBI, however, grants aggregated approvals on an annual basis. As on date, the annual branch expansion plan of Syndicate Bank (a nationalized bank) is under consideration of the RBI. The proposal includes opening of 8 branches in urban/semi-urban centres in the State of Uttar Pradesh.

RBI has reported that no proposal for opening of any branch in the State

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

of Uttar Pradesh by the Uttar Pradesh Cooperative Bank Ltd., or by Primary (Urban) Cooperative Banks is pending with them.

Energy costing of gas in Gujarat

*216. SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI:
SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Gujarat is being meted out injustice in energy costing by incurring higher transportation cost on coal but paying the same transportation charge as interland States in case of gas;

(b) whether the State Government of Gujarat has represented for allowing the benefit in terms of a lower cost for transporting gas over shorter distance *vis-a-vis* interland States as per the practice followed for transportation of coal; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Central Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (c) The gas from onshore/isolated fields in Gujarat is supplied through dedicated regional networks or spur lines to customers in the State. In these cases, transmission tariff is computed on the basis of investment in the respective regional networks. As the fields are located in Gujarat, the investment in regional networks for supplying gas to customers in the State would be less in relation to investment in networks catering to a number of States and therefore, the transmission tariff for customers in Gujarat getting gas through regional networks is lower.

In case of trunk lines *viz.*, Hazira-Vijaipur-Jagdishpur (HVJ) pipeline and Dahej-Vijaipur pipeline (DVPL), a combined single tariff of Rs. 831/ MSCM, with escalation formula, is being followed w.e.f 1.6.2006. However, based on the request of the Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Limited (GSPCL) and to benefit the customers in Gujarat, the tariff for connectivity of Gujarat State Petronet Limited (GSPL) to DVPL has been kept at Rs. 280/MSCM. No request was received from the Government of Gujarat in this regard.